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THE DESIGN OF THE ASSASSIN FRUSTRATED BY HECTOR DARE.

THE INDIAN NABOB:

OR, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—MORE JUGGLERIES.—THE SANTASSEE.

I LEFT off in my last sheet with a notice of certain juggleries performed in one of the principal streets
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of Delhi. I take up my pen now to resume the account. Among the jugglers was one man who appeared to be their chief, and also a female child, some nine or ten years of age, of a beautiful countenance, and richly though lightly dressed. At the

command of this chief, a basket of wicker-work was brought into the circle, and inverted over the girl as she stood on the ground, who was thus hidden as by a huge extinguisher. Then commenced a dialogue between the juggler and the concealed child, which gradually waxed warmer and warmer, as in a fierce dispute, until the man, wrought, as it seemed, into a frenzy of rage, and uttering fearful threats, drew a sword with which he was girded, and plunged it through and through the frail basket. A dreadful shriek from the child accompanied the first savage thrust; and this was succeeded by moans, fainter and fainter till they entirely ceased, while the apparent murderer—the fury of his rage being exhausted, and his vengeance satiated—ceased from his horrible work, and leaned on the hilt of his naked sword, down which trickled drops of blood.

I cannot convey to you, Archie, the intense agony I suffered at this sight—agony but little allayed by a whisper from Mr. Dalzell, who forcibly laid his hand on my arm just in time to prevent my throwing myself from my horse and rushing into the circle, though to what end and purpose I know not.

"Be quiet, Hector; it is all glamour and deception, as you will presently see," he said: but, looking into his face, I could not fail to observe that his lips were deadly pale, and that drops of perspiration stood on his brow; and, glancing around on the assembled multitude, I perceived that the scene, although they probably anticipated its termination, had stirred up strong though varied emotions in all the spectators.

I obeyed my patron's monition, while at the same time I doubted his assurances of visual deception; and though the first impulse was checked, I did not care to suppress the feelings of mingled horror and indignation which prompted it. In truth, the whole scene was so naturally contrived, and there was such seeming reality in the frantic rage of the juggler, as well as evident impossibility that the poor little victim could have escaped his murderous thrusts, that I firmly believed the next sight would be the lifeless body of the slain child, whose shriek and expiring moans had stirred in me such thoughts of revenge.

Meanwhile, the perpetrator of the foul deed still remained motionless, leaning on the gory weapon, and contemplating the weak barrier which concealed the victim of his insane fury; while the silence which had fallen on the crowd began to be broken by exclamations of strong impatience, if not of vengeance against the supposed murderer. How soon fiery passions might have been raised to action I cannot say; for at that moment there was a movement in the thickest of the throng, and a moment afterwards a child—nay, the very child whom we had seen thus imprisoned—ran into the circle, sprang into the juggler's arms, and tenderly embraced him. Another moment, and with a slight movement of the juggler's foot the basket was overthrown, discovered to be empty, and the ground beneath it not only vacant, but exhibiting no traces of the recent fray.

A deafening shout arose from the crowd; and when the child, sliding from the juggler's arms, deftly threaded the throng, and sought contributions from the spectators, you may imagine that a rich harvest of gain was reaped for her masters.

You must not expect me, Archie, to explain this extraordinary performance. I know only that I saw the child covered with the basket, in a clear and open space, from which unseen escape would have seemed impossible, surrounded as it was by hundreds of eager and inquisitive eyes; that I heard her voice in conversation, her shriek, her moans; saw the sword-thrusts, and afterwards the stained blade; saw the child, whom I supposed slain, enter the circle unharmed; and convinced myself with my own eyes that the common expedients of a trap-door and an underground passage were wanting.

But enough of this: my adventure is yet to come.

While the crowd was slowly dispersing, my attention was irresistibly drawn towards a wretched-looking being, seated, or rather crouched, by the road-side, and so utterly absorbed in his own contemplations as to be regardless of the tumult around. The man was a Brahminical Hindoo, and one of those numerous fanatical impostors, or devotees, of whom I have before spoken under the term of Sanyassees; and by the large slits in his ears, from which were hanging heavy appendages, as well as by the perpendicular lines of paint on his forehead, I knew that he was of the sect of the Jaguis—worshippers of the vengeful Seeva of the debasing Hindoo mythology, and capable, probably, in spite of his assumed sanctity, of the most detestable deeds. And, whether it arose from a secret consciousness of this on the part of his countrymen, or from the high superstitious reverence they felt towards one whose distinctive title assumed that he was "united to God," or from both causes combined, I could but observe that, notwithstanding the pressure of the crowd, a clear space was left around him, while contributions, or offerings of money, were not sparingly placed at his feet.

I have said that my attention was drawn towards this Sanyasse; perhaps I could scarcely have explained why, since such objects were common enough throughout the length and breadth of Hindostan, and in every city, town, and village, and by every road-side—except that his countenance was so tiger-like in conformation, and so crafty and treacherous in expression, as to have retained scarcely any traces of humanity, supposing it had ever possessed them.

Except that this fanatic had a tiger skin thrown over his shoulder, so as to cover his right arm and breast, he was entirely destitute of clothing: his hair, tied in a large knot behind his head, was matted with filth; so was his body; while the nails of his exposed hand and feet were like the talons of the animal whom he most resembled, so long, crooked, pointed, and strong were they. Methought, as I looked at this wretch, that if the doctrine of the transmigration of souls—in which these poor Hindoos profess to believe—were true, there would be but little difficulty in deciding what kind of body *his* soul had last tenanted.

I had time to make these observations, for the crowd prevented our progress; and while making them, I noticed a most extraordinary and sudden change in the countenance of the Jagui. A gleam like that of unholy exultation flushed across his swarthy features, and lighted up his dark eyes

with wild, lurid fire, while a sort of convulsive spasm passed over his whole frame. It was but for a moment. For one second I took my eyes off from him; and when I looked again, there was the same apparent immovability and abstraction from surrounding objects; save that under the pent-house of his projecting eyebrows, I could detect keen and scrutinizing, though furtive, glances fixed upon a certain group in the crowd.

I watched the fanatic still more narrowly, till I was sure that one man in that group was the object of his cat-like watchfulness; and for a moment or two I turned my attention to this individual. He was a youthful Mahomedan, coarsely dressed in the ordinary attire of a porter; and his countenance, as well as his hands, was so besmirched, probably with the day's toil, that it would have been difficult to take an exact inventory of his features, which, however, so far as seen, were manly, if not commanding. He bore on his head a basket laden with fruit; but either the pressure of the crowd, or indolence, kept him standing nearly on one spot, which, by the way, was very near to our horses' heads.

You may have remarked, Archie, how sometimes some trivial matter serves to excite speculation, and to swallow up for a time all other thoughts. It was so with me at that time. Plainly, with neither the Hindoo Sanyassee nor the Mahomedan porter had I any personal concern; and yet, I forgot all that surrounded me, and even the exciting scene I had so lately witnessed, in watching both the watcher and the watched.

I turned again to the Hindoo, whose whole soul seemed to be concentrated on the young Mahomedan. I saw him shift his position, without, however, for one moment removing his hateful gaze from its object. He rose on to his feet, and with his left hand drew closer around himself his only covering, the stiffened tiger skin. That movement, slight as it was, saved a life: for it betrayed to me, though only for a single instant, the concealed right hand, clutching a bright, naked dagger. All was clear to me then: the devotee of Seeva was an assassin, and his intended victim was the unsuspecting porter.

I had scarcely made this discovery, or arrived at this mental conclusion, when a movement in the throng enabled us slightly to advance, and thus brought me still nearer to the young Mahomedan: at the same time, with a stealthy movement, which I can liken to nothing so apt as that of a cat gliding towards its prey, the fanatic had approached within three or four paces of his victim; and I once more caught sight, for an instant, of the gleaming dagger beneath the folds of his savage dress.

The next instant the man sprang forward, and with one bound cleared the distance between himself and the porter: the next, the tiger skin (appropriate covering of a treacherous heart) was dropped from his shoulder, and the bare attenuated arm was raised high in the air, grasping the cowardly, murderous weapon. One moment more, and it would have been plunged into the back of the object of vengeance. But, rapid as were his movements, his design was frustrated. One touch of my spur, one forward leap of my startled but obedient horse, placed me within reach of the in-

tended murderer's arm, and enabled me to seize it in my grasp.

All this had passed so swiftly, that I had had no time to give an alarm, nor had the plot and counterplot been perceived by any of the multitude around; but the yell of savage disappointment raised by the Hindoo when his arm was arrested just at the moment of striking the fatal blow, and his impotent struggles for release, drew on us the observation of the crowd. Then ensued a scene of tumult and confusion it would be in vain to attempt to describe; and it was well that our guards were sufficiently alert and faithful to interpose between me and the first fury of the Hindoo populace, who witnessed the struggle without apprehending its cause, and saw only that one of their sacred Sanyassees was in the violent and sacrilegious hands of a Feringhi. At the same time, the young Mahomedan turned quickly round and confronted his intended assassin. Mutual hate shot from their eyes, and a rapid movement of the youth's hand to his girdle convinced me both that a sword was his familiar weapon, and that, had he been then armed, he would quickly have avenged his quarrel. For a moment he stood, sternly confronting the fanatic.

"Wretch, we shall meet again!" he exclaimed between his teeth. Then, turning to me, he added: "Thou hast saved my life; I thank thee; we also may meet again." Then, casting from him his basket, he disappeared in the crowd.

Meanwhile, the dagger had fallen from the hand of the baffled Sanyassee, and he had ceased to struggle: he only glared at me with savage fury; but the tumult around increased; knives were drawn, and blows were stricken.

"Let the fellow go, Hector, and push on for life," said Mr. Dalzell, whom the first alarm had brought to my side.

"The rascal has been attempting murder," I replied hastily; "I caught him in the act."

"And there will be murder done, as well as attempted, if you persist in holding him," said my patron sternly. "Let go, I say, and put spurs to your horse, or——"

I obeyed, and, as the fanatic made a stoop for his fallen weapon, I had placed myself beyond his reach.

"Now spur, spur," shouted Mr. Dalzell, and, as we and our guards dashed forward, the mob gave way. In a few minutes we were past immediate danger; but we did not draw bridle till we halted in the courtyard of our palace.

"You could not have done otherwise," said Mr. Dalzell, when I explained the matter to him; "but it gives us an additional reason why we should quit Delhi as soon as may be. You have roused the religious prejudices of the Hindoo populace, and your life will be in daily jeopardy. We are safe for to-night, however, and to-morrow will be a new day."

With this rather uncertain consolation I retired to my couch that night.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

I HAVE never laid claim to bravery, Archie. If I have, at different times in my life, met danger without giving way to arrant cowardice, it is

because, in the first place, I could not have avoided the danger, and, in the second place, cowardice, in itself, generally has less hope and promise of safety than even a certain amount of rashness. But believe me, I have never courted "reputation at the cannon's mouth," and have sometimes had a very throbbing heart hidden by a sufficiently bold exterior.

Perhaps you may say that this disclaimer does not apply to the action I have just described, since I might have avoided interference with the frantic Sanyassee. Well, Archie, give me what credit you like for the animal impulse, and let me be thankful that, by that impulse, I averted a murderous stroke, and consequently a great crime; but you will have to deduct largely from this favourable estimate when I tell you that I passed the next day in nervous agitation, and, like a timid girl, could have run away and hid myself when, past the dusk of night, a trampling of horses around our palace, and an authoritative thundering at the external gate of our courtyard, suddenly broke the dead silence which had just before prevailed around us.

"The Philistines are upon us," said Mr. Dalzell, quietly enough, but gravely enough also, while we both rose and hastened to the window, from which, however, nothing was to be seen but the flickering light of a torch outside the barrier, at which a second appeal for admittance was very soon made.

Before this could be repeated we were in the courtyard, attended by a few of our guards, who had hurriedly armed themselves, while our trembling servants, being non-combatants, had concealed themselves in the holes and corners of our rambling palace.

"Sahib, they are but ten," whispered our Havildar Hassan, who had, as it seemed, reconnoitred our visitors through a loophole in the wall. "They are but ten, and we number——"

"It matters not, or rather, we may need to put ourselves presently into a posture of defence; but I will first know who claims entrance. Stay you behind, Hector; Hassan shall with me to the gate;" and before I could frame an expostulation, he had left my side.

The parley was short enough, and, to all appearances, satisfactory; for in a few minutes the cumbrous bars and bolts were dropped and withdrawn, and the gates thrown open by my patron himself. Immediately afterwards ten or eleven horsemen entered the yard, one bearing a torch, which, however, he quenched as soon as the leader had sprung from his charger and entered the palace.

I followed without fear, Archie, though not without wonder; for by the flashing of the torch, ere it was extinguished, I knew the visitor to be the young Moslem whose life I had the day before saved. He was differently accoutred, however. His porter's dress had been exchanged for the smart and rich costume of a native officer. A jewel of some value glittered in the front of his turban, and the hilt of his sword was also studded with gems. Probably his age was five-and-twenty, or upwards; and his countenance, now divested of its partial disguise, was handsome, and very well befitting the rank and station which were evi-

dently more natural to him than those he had assumed on the previous day.

He extended his hand frankly to me, after we had entered our apartment, though at the same time with sufficient dignity and condescension, I thought.

"Kafir, your hand did good service yesterday to the coolie; the subahdar thanks you."

I answered I remember not what, but in some commonplace way, as my command of words permitted, that I was rejoiced at his escape.

"Escape! true. Heaven willed it: the son of Abdallah's father is not to be slain by a heathenish assassin."

Hector. The heathen was filled with rage, however, Abdallah bahadur.

Abdallah. May the dogs defile his father's grave and his mother's and his own!

Mr. Dalzell. That is a bitter curse; think better of it. Yet would I know, friend subahdar, wherefore you were singled out for his vengeance.

Abdallah (*who by this time had seated himself on a cushion, and was composedly smoking a hookah, put into his hands by our burdar*). Who can tell? Men hide their thoughts till Allah reveals them.

Mr. Dalzell. That is true; nevertheless, the Sanyassee's thoughts were not altogether concealed: his looks and attempted deed told of hate and vengeance.

Abdallah. Doubtless the man was a madman. Let us not waste words upon him. Kafir (*this to me*), you must mount and ride. I have sworn to protect you, and by daybreak many coses must stretch between you and Jehan-Abad (the city of Jehan—Delhi).

Hector (*in alarm*). How? why?

Abdallah (*composedly*). Listen: the jagui has many banded with him, and, moreover, his person is accounted sacred by the heathen. Say that he sought my life, though wherefore, who can tell? Certain it is that you defeated his purpose. Then will his fury be turned against you; even as when a tiger is robbed of his prey, is he furious against the robber.

Hector. All this I can conceive, yet——

Abdallah. Nay, listen. I may not remain in Jehan-Abad after my message to the sahib ambassador (*turning to Mr. Dalzell*) be accomplished. Of this I will speak presently; and, distant, I cannot throw over you the shield of my protection. And this much is more, that flight alone can save you from the fate that was destined for me.

Hector (*to Mr. Dalzell, in English*). You would not counsel me to run away on such vague surmises.

Mr. Dalzell (*in the same language*). I am not sure that I should not, supposing our friend here to be trustworthy.

Hector. Yes, but who shall avouch his fidelity? Abdallah (*in English also, but speaking it rather imperfectly*). That will this scroll.

Saying this, the subahdar drew from his bosom a paper, which he placed in the hands of my patron.

The natural start of surprise with which Mr. Dalzell (as well as myself) discovered that our visitor was not ignorant of our native tongue, gave way to deeper tokens of astonishment, not

unmingled with embarrassment, I fancied, when he had read a few lines of the mysterious document. He drew me aside to another part of the room, and spoke in a low tone.

"It will be well for you to accompany the prince——"

"Prince!" I exclaimed, not unnaturally taken aback by the announcement, which seemed to have slipped unawares from my patron's lips.

"Hush! we are not alone. Did I say prince? Well, there are many sorts of princes in the world, and many degrees of princelhood. For the present, our handsome friend yonder chooses to be subahdar or captain, as he pleased yesterday to be a porter. I may not explain just now; you will know more about him if you——yes, you had better accept his invitation. What he says is too true: you are in danger here, and he both can and will protect you. I pledge myself for his faith."

Hector. But, dear sir, if there be danger to me here, as is not unlikely, there will be danger to you also.

Mr. Dalzell. That does not follow. In fact, your temporary absence may be necessary to my safety, or it may be desirable for the success of our mission. Nay, I am not sure that your adventure of yesterday may not be turned to good account; but, meanwhile, you must put yourself out of the way of danger.

Hector. And I am not to know who this handsome young soldier is?

Mr. Dalzell. Not now; he will tell you himself.

Hector. Nor whither I am to accompany him?

Mr. Dalzell. His home at present, I believe, is in the Great Desert, westward. By the way, Hector, you expressed a wish the other day to turn your horse's head in that direction. It may now be gratified.

Hector (with some interest, roused by the mention of the Great Desert). And you really wish me, sir, to——

Mr. Dalzell. To accompany this Abdallah subahdar?—yes.

I shall not, however, record any more of this dialogue, nor is it either necessary or expedient for me to divulge the secret instructions I hastily received from my superior. It is enough that, an hour later, I returned to the apartment, equipped for my hasty journey, and found my new friend still quietly smoking his hookah, and in earnest conversation with my patron. By midnight we were in the saddle, with Delhi many miles behind us.

THE HOUSE-DOCTOR.

AMONG all the professional men practising the various arts tending to preserve and elevate society, to assuage the woes and mitigate the evils of life, to defend property or to advance the rate of progress, there will not be found a single one under the designation above named. We have eminent physicians for the cure of every disorder to which the human frame is liable; we have also horse-doctors, cow-doctors, dog-doctors, cat-doctors, and bird-doctors, and doctors of various undiplomed degrees besides; but we have no house-doctor. The nearest thing approaching it is that

mysterious, self-asserting, but unproducible individual who professes to cure smoky chimneys, but whose professions too often end in smoke, under cover of which he is given to retreat, and we hear no more of him. It is true we have the surveyor, to whom we can hand over his guinea, if we like, and get his opinion of a house before we rent or purchase; but your surveyor is a matter-of-fact, brick-and-mortar professor, who is apt to confine his scrutiny of a house to its mere muscle, bone, and sinew, and, contenting himself by confirming or impeaching its claims to a sound physical constitution, does not trouble his head with much besides.

Now it is a fact that houses are subject to deplorable diseases, the symptoms of which, so long as they remain empty, are apparent to no man; but they are no sooner inhabited than the diseases appear in fatal force, to the consternation and misery of the unfortunate tenants. Seduced by the blandishments of "a desirable residence," many a man has moved into new quarters, in which he has no sooner settled down than his once cheerful family begins to mope and sicken; the doctor becomes a daily visitor; phials and pill-boxes pour in night and morning; and it is well if the undertaker does not follow in their wake. In the majority of cases, Paterfamilias has no idea of the true source of the evil; he does not know the fatal fact that the house he has got into is diseased; that the "desirable residence," of which he is so proud, is scourging his innocent family, and preparing them for the churchyard. Had there been a house-doctor—a man qualified, so to speak, to feel the pulse of a house, and ascertain its fitness for human habitation—he might have consulted such a man before he committed himself to the perils of an experiment that threatens to end so fatally.

But what are the diseases to which houses are subject? Let us say something in answer to that question, before we proceed any further. In the first place, a house may be so situated, either in London or elsewhere, that, be its construction and workmanship what they may, even of the very best, it shall yet, from its position, be utterly unfit for habitation. Thus, a house near an overfilled graveyard will inevitably be invaded by the gases given out by decomposition and corruption, especially if the soil of the burial-ground be subject to repeated removal or disturbance. Then, a house in the vicinity of any of those bone-boiling, glue-manufacturing, horse-slaughtering establishments, or other like nuisances, which the Legislature so disgracefully tolerates in the very centres of some of our large towns, will be subject to periodical fits of disease whenever the wind sets in from the obnoxious quarter. Again, a house standing on a wet clay soil, though it might have been healthy enough if proper precautions had been taken in laying the foundation, may, if such precautions have been neglected, prove so thoroughly damp and dropsical, as to defy all attempts at maintaining a wholesome atmosphere within its walls. Once more, a house standing on the dryest gravel, and unexceptionably constructed, may, by the pernicious interference of its neighbours—by being blocked and dominated by tall buildings to the south and west, and exposed to the north and east

without defence—such a house will be cold, dull, and cheerless almost from one year's end to the other. It is a fact that there are whole ranks of such houses, not only in London, but in many of our fashionable towns and cities, in which people can only be induced to reside by the temptation of a very low rent. There are numerous other defects of site which might be mentioned, some of them too obvious to escape recognition, while others are altogether as recondite.

But supposing the site to be all that could be desired, the house, though handsome and inviting in appearance, may yet harbour the hidden seeds of discomfort and disease. There may be a radical defect in the drains, a defect discernible only upon habitation. The culverts may be of old bricks, pervious to rats; and you are no sooner fairly installed, than these whiskered gentry make their appearance, and dispute with cook the possession of the kitchen. You did not know, what the house-doctor—had there been such a person to consult—would have told you, namely, that it is impossible for a house to be permanently healthy without pipe-drains; and even had you known that much, you perhaps could not have ascertained whether the drains were pipes or not.

Or the drains may be all right, on the best pipe principle, and every particle of the sewage duly led off into the main drain, and yet you are half poisoned daily by foul smells in your drawing-room, bed-rooms, and staircases, for which you have no means of accounting, while their vile influence is telling perniciously on the health of your family. Your landlord assures you it is all fancy, and you try to persuade yourself that it is so; but a sick household is no mere imagination—and then your nose will not be persuaded out of its function; so you institute in person a search for the cause of offence, and find it at last in the pipe which carries off the rain from the roof, and which the sapient plumber has sunk right down into the sewer, without supplying it with any valve or trap. The consequence is, that you have the regurgitating odours of the common drain overflowing the pipe and pouring into your open windows, whenever, from the rising of the tide in the river or from any other cause, the current is stayed or repelled from its onward course. This omission of traps in pipes or culverts, communicating with the street-sewers, is at times productive of effects truly awful. A very few years back the attention of the authorities was drawn to the extraordinary sickness and mortality that prevailed in a batch of comparatively new houses on the Surrey side of the river. On examination, it was found that all the houses had been fitted up with cesspools and untrapped closets, communicating with flat-bottomed brick drains—the drains passing under the houses. The foul odours that escaped into the rooms were the cause of the sickness and deaths. When this fact became apparent, the owners of the houses were compelled to abolish the cesspools, and to substitute pipes for the flat-bottomed brick channels. Mark the result: the sickness was almost immediately reduced to the ordinary amount, and the mortality in the following year diminished from a ratio of fifty-five to that of thirteen!!

But it may happen that the air of a house shall

be perfectly sweet and wholesome, and yet there is no getting enough of it for healthful purposes. From some cause or other, it seems to stagnate, rather than circulate in the rooms. If you were learned in the art of ventilation, you might perhaps remedy this evil; but you are not, and you have to submit to it, and do the best you can. Or, on the other hand, you get too much of a good thing—your house is a regular wind-trough, a sort of *Æolus's* bag; your drawing-room carpet bellies like the sail of a ship in a gale. Where the wind comes from you cannot conceive; it sighs and sings up the staircase day and night; it whines and wails through the dark hours, keeping you awake; and it acts like a burglar with your doors and windows, as though resolved to burst in and whirl you away.

Or, again, with nothing to complain of on the score of the air, you feel yourself heavy and lumpy, and your family are out of sorts, and growing from bad to worse, with no visible or conceivable cause. By-and-by you are obliged to have recourse to your medical man, and he alarms you with the information that you have been poisoning yourself with lead. You are unwilling to believe him; you have no faith in the influence of leaden pipes and cisterns on water; you have drank water from lead pipes all your life, and were never poisoned before. True, you have heard of the exiled Bourbons at Claremont, who were said to be half poisoned by the lead cisterns, but that did not impress you as a probable story, and you are sceptical still. But now your medical man tells you that he is right and you are wrong; that water aerated in the slightest degree with carbonic acid gas acts as a solvent to leaden pipes and cisterns; that such is the case with the water of the district you inhabit; and that, if you want to get well, and get your family well, you must change your leaden service-pipes for iron or gutta-percha, and your leaden cistern for a zinc one.

But the contingencies of house-disease do not stop here. A late experience has shown us that disease and death may lurk in the luxuries and fanciful decorations designed only to please the eye. It has just been discovered, and proved beyond a reasonable doubt, that arsenical poisons may emanate from the papering of the room we sit in, and that in a degree sufficient to prostrate a man on a sick-bed, and assuredly, if the arsenic were in the papering of his sick-chamber, to kill him. Cases of this kind have been recently reported in the "*Times*" newspaper, and corroborated by the concurring experience of different correspondents.

Such are some of the diseases and delinquencies of houses, of which the generality of persons who are driven by circumstances to go a house-hunting know but little or nothing. We make no mention of such trifles as dry-rot, vermin, gaping floors, cracked ceilings, and leaky roofs; of these a man may judge at a glance, but not so of the latent plagues to which we have directed attention above.

We contend, therefore, for the advent of the house-doctor, whose business it shall be to make himself master, not only of the outer and substantial, but of the inner and sanitary conditions of houses, and who, for a reasonable consideration, shall afford the migrating public the information

they want. To us it appears that the man, supposing him to be duly qualified, who shall start in such a profession, will have a fair chance of success; and we have the pleasure to believe that he will render an important service to society. Is there any reason, let us ask, why a house to let should not be subject to the same or similar tests and examinations as a ship that is to sail? We register our vessels at Lloyd's, and when we are going a voyage, we do not send our luggage on board the "Nancy" until we have ascertained that she stands A 1 in the list. Why should there not be registers in every parish, of houses to be let, setting forth the true characters of each under the hand and certificate of the house-doctor, who might be appointed, or appoint himself, to keep the register for the inspection of applicants? We denounce it as infamous to send out upon the ocean vessels that are not sea-worthy, and we take every precaution to prevent unprincipled men from endangering the lives of their fellow-creatures; why, then, should we remain indifferent in a matter of no less moment, and one in which far greater numbers of the community have a direct personal interest? On behalf of the rent-paying public we demand the installation of the house-doctor. Let him step forth at once, and be dubbed with the degree of *Æ. D., F. U. S.—Ædium Doctor and Fellow of Universal Society.*

INTERCHANGE OF COURTESIES BETWEEN THE AMERICANS AND THE JAPANESE.

It was only the other day that we read an announcement to the effect that, in imitation of the Siamese and other sensible Oriental nations, a Japanese embassy is about shortly to appear in England. This is certainly one of the most startling changes of modern times, and could not have been safely predicted ten or even five years ago. This disposition on the part of the proverbially exclusive people of Japan to come at length within the pale of the family of nations we owe, in a great measure, to the American expedition of 1852-4. A narrative of that visit to the "Hermetic Empire" has just been published by the Religious Tract Society,* from which we extract the following passages, descriptive of the presents offered by the emperor to the representatives of the United States, and the banquet afterwards given by the latter to the Japanese government functionaries on board the American flag-ship.

"The Japanese had already acknowledged, with courtly thanks, the presents which had been bestowed on behalf of the government; and now, on the 24th of March, the commodore was invited to receive the various gifts which had been ordered by the emperor in return. He accordingly landed at Yoku-hama, with a suite of officers and his interpreters, and was courteously received at the treaty-

house. The large reception-room was crowded with the imperial offerings. They were of Japanese manufacture, and consisted of specimens of rich brocades and silks, of their famous lacquered ware, such as *chow-chow* boxes, tables, trays, and goblets, all skilfully wrought, and finished with an exquisite polish; of porcelain cups of wonderful lightness and transparency, adorned with figures and flowers in gold and variegated colours, and exhibiting a workmanship which surpassed even that of the ware for which the Chinese are so remarkable; fans, pipe-cases, and articles of apparel in ordinary use, of no great value but of exceeding interest, were scattered in among the more luxurious and costly objects. With the usual order and neatness, the various presents had been arranged in lots, and classified according to the rank of those for whom they were respectively intended.

"The commissioners took their position at the further end of the room; and when the commodore and his suite entered, the prince Hayashi read aloud the list of presents, and the names of persons to whom they were to be given. The announcement was then translated, first into Dutch and then into English. The ceremony being over, the commodore was invited into the inner room, where he was presented with two complete sets of Japanese coins, three matchlocks, and two swords. These gifts, though of no great intrinsic value, were very significant evidences of the desire of the Japanese to express their respect for the representative of the United States. The bestowal of the coins especially, in direct opposition to the Japanese laws, which forbid all issue of their money beyond the kingdom, was an act of marked favour.

"As the commodore prepared to depart, the commissioners said that there was one article intended for the president which had not yet been exhibited. They accordingly conducted the commodore and his officers to the beach, where one or two hundred sacks of rice were pointed out, heaped up in readiness to be sent on board the ships. As that immense supply of substantial food seemed to excite some wonder on the part of the Americans, Yenoske remarked that it was customary with the Japanese, when bestowing royal presents, to include a certain quantity of rice, although he did not say whether that quantity always amounted, as on the present occasion, to hundreds of immense sacks.

"While contemplating these substantial evidences of Japanese generosity, the attention of all was suddenly riveted upon a body of monstrous fellows, who tramped down the beach like so many huge elephants. They were professional wrestlers, and formed part of the retinue of the princes, who kept them for their private amusement and for public entertainment. They were some twenty-five in number, and were men enormously tall in stature, and immense in weight of flesh. Their proprietors seemed proud of them, and were careful to show their points to the greatest advantage before the astonished Americans. Some two or three of these huge monsters had the character of being the most famous wrestlers in Japan. Koyanagi, the reputed bully of the capital, was one of them, and paraded himself with the conscious pride of superior massiveness and strength. He

* "Japan Opened."

was especially brought forward for the commodore's minute examination. On attempting, accordingly, to grasp the monster's immense arm, he found it as solid as it was huge, while the folds of massive flesh on his huge neck fell like the dewlap of a prize ox. As some surprise was naturally expressed at this wondrous exhibition of animal development, the fellow himself gave a grunt indicative of his flattered vanity.

"As a preliminary display of the power of these men, the princes set them to the removal of the sacks of rice to a convenient place on the shore for shipping. Each of the sacks weighed not less than one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and there were only a couple of the wrestlers who did not carry each two sacks at a time. They bore them on the right shoulder, lifting the first from the ground without help, but obtaining aid for the raising of the second. One man carried a sack suspended by his teeth, and another, taking one in his arms, turned repeated summersaults as he held it, and apparently with much ease.

"After these performances it was proposed that the spectators should retire to the treaty-house, that they might see the wrestlers exhibit their professional feats. These men were most carefully provided for, and waited on by a number of attendants, who were always at hand to supply them with fans, which they often required, and to assist them in dressing and undressing. Rich garments were now cast over their huge frames by these servitors, and they were led to the scene of their exploits. The details of the performances are too disgusting to be narrated here, and we shall accordingly pass them over in silence. The circumstance has been referred to thus far, as affording a glimpse of a degrading Japanese custom, but one, we regret to add, not confined to that country.

"From the brutal performances of these trained monsters, the Americans turned with a glow of pleasure and satisfaction to the exhibition of the telegraph and the railroad. It was a happy contrast, which a higher and purer civilization presented, to the revolting display on the part of the Japanese officials. In place of a parade of brute force, here was a triumphant disclosure, to a partially enlightened people, of the success of science and enterprise. The natives evinced great delight in again seeing the rapid movement of the Lilliputian locomotive; and one of the scribes of the commissioners took his seat upon the car, while the engineer stood upon the tender, feeding the furnace with one hand, and directing the diminutive engine with the other. Crowds of the people gathered around, and looked on the repeated circlings of the train with unabated pleasure and surprise, unable to repress a shout of delight at each blast of the steam whistle. The telegraph with its wonders, though before witnessed, still created renewed interest, and all the beholders were unceasing in their exclamations of admiration and astonishment.

"The agricultural instruments having been explained to the commissioners, a formal delivery of the presents ensued. After this, a detachment of marines from the squadron were put through their various evolutions and drills, while the bands played martial airs. The Japanese dignitaries seemed to take very great interest in this military

display, and expressed themselves much gratified at the soldierly bearing and excellent discipline of the men. This closed the proceedings of the day; and the commissioners having accepted an invitation of the commodore to dine with him on the 27th, the Japanese retired to the treaty-house, and the Americans returned to their ships.

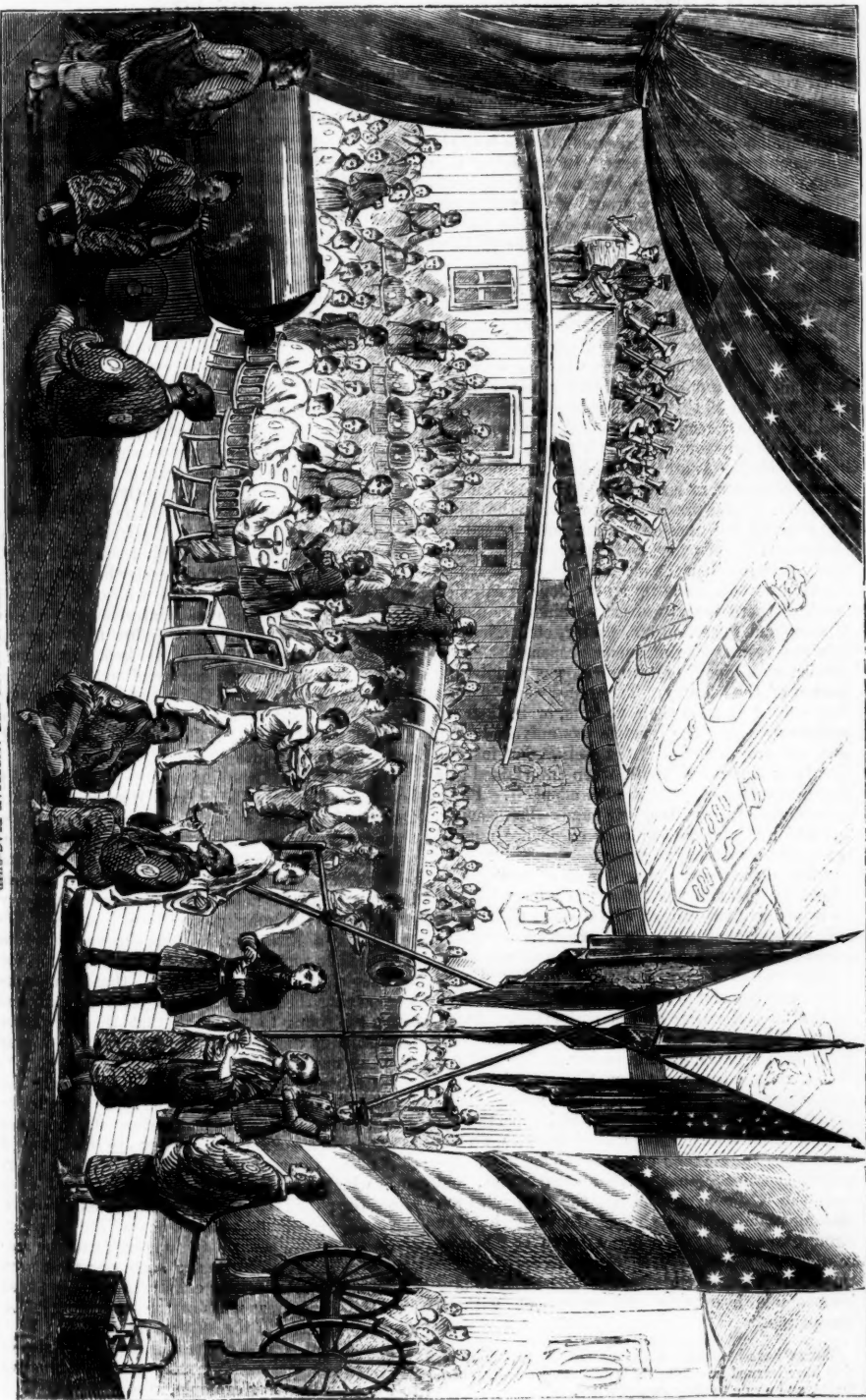
"Extensive preparations were made in the flag-ship, preparatory to this occasion. The quarter-deck was adorned with a great variety of flags; and all parts of the steamer were put in perfect order; while the officers and men were attired in their uniforms to do honour to their visitors. The commodore was resolved to give the Japanese a favourable impression of American hospitality, and had accordingly spared no pains in providing for the large party expected, which was understood to comprise no less than seventy persons, exclusive of the boatmen and other servitors. As it was known that the strictness of Japanese etiquette would not allow the high commissioners to sit at the same table with their subordinates, the commodore ordered two banquets, one in his cabin for the chief dignitaries, and another on the quarter-deck. Having resolved to give such an entertainment as soon as the progress of negotiations should warrant it, he had reserved for it live bullocks, some sheep, and a supply of game and poultry. These, with the ordinary cabin stores, furnished every requisite for the preparation of a generous feast, and, under the cunning hands of the *chef de cuisine*, assumed nearly every variety of dish attractive to the eye and to the taste.

"The guests, on their approach, were saluted by a salvo of seventeen guns. After an examination of the sloop-of-war 'Macedonia,' they repaired to the flag-ship, and were conducted through the different departments of the vessel, and shown the guns and machinery. A boat was then lowered, with a howitzer in its bows, which was repeatedly discharged, much to their amusement; for, although not a warlike people—at least in the modern epochs of their history—the Japanese evidently had a great fondness for martial exercise and display. The engines were next put in motion, and they evinced the usual intelligence of the higher class of the natives in their inquiries and remarks. After satisfying their curiosity, dinner was announced, and the five commissioners were conducted to the commodore's cabin, where a very handsome banquet awaited them. The subordinate officials, amounting to about sixty, were provided for under the awning on the quarter-deck, where a large table had been spread with an abundant supply.

"The four captains of the squadron, with the commodore's secretary and interpreter, joined the commissioners. Yenoske, the Japanese interpreter, was allowed the privilege, as a special favour on the part of his superiors, to sit at a side-table in the cabin, where his humble position did not seem to disturb his equanimity or his appetite. Hayashi, who always preserved his grave and dignified bearing, ate and drank sparingly, but tasted of every dish and sipped of every kind of wine. The others proved themselves famous trenchermen, and entered more heartily than their chief into the convivialities of the occasion.

"The Japanese party upon deck, who were

THE BANQUET ON BOARD THE AMERICAN FLAG-SHIP.



entertained by a large body of American officers, became noisy as the feast went on, taking the lead in proposing and drinking healths with great avidity. They continued shouting at the top of their voices, and were heard far above the music of the bands that enlivened the entertainment. It became, in fact, ere long, a scene of boisterous and bacchanalian conviviality, discreditable to both the guests and their entertainers. In the latter it is evident that Christianity had no fit representatives. The rapid disappearance of the viands was quite a marvel. In eating, the Japanese showed little moderation or discrimination in the choice of dishes, and in the order of courses.

"As a most abundant provision had been made, there were remnants of the feast left after all the guests had been satisfied; and most of these the Japanese, according to custom, prepared to carry off with them. The Japanese always carry an abundant supply of different kinds of paper within the left bosom of their loose robes, in a capacious pocket. One description is as soft as cotton cloth, and exceedingly tough. This is used for a pocket handkerchief. Another furnishes the materials for taking notes, or for wrapping up the fragments of a feast. On the present occasion, when the dinner was over, all the guests simultaneously spread out their long folds of paper, and gathering what scraps they could lay their hands on, without regard to the kind of food, made up an envelope of eatables, in which there was a most extraordinary confusion of sour and sweet, meats, pastry, etc. Nor was this the result of gluttonous propensities, or a deficiency of good breeding; it was simply the fashion of the country. These unsavoury parcels they stowed away in their pockets, or in their capacious sleeves. The practice was universal; and they not only followed it themselves, but insisted that their American guests, when entertained at a Japanese banquet, should also adopt it. Paper parcels were thrust into their hands when leaving, and which it would have been an offence against the native hospitality to refuse.

"After the dinner, the Japanese were entertained by an exhibition of negro minstrelsy, got up by some of the sailors, who blacked their faces, and dressed themselves in character. Even the gravity of the saturnine Hayashi was not proof against the grotesque and novel display, for he joined with the rest in the general hilarity provoked by the farcical antics of the performers. About sunset the guests prepared to depart, many of them being anything but sober. The excited Matsusaki, on leaving, threw his arms about the commodore's neck, crushing, in his heedless embrace, a pair of new epaulettes, and repeating in Japanese the words, 'Nippon and America, all the same heart.' He then proceeded to his boat, supported by some of his steadier companions, and soon the whole party had left the ship and were making rapidly for the shore. In reviewing the circumstances of this banquet there is much to regret and condemn in the facilities and temptations afforded to intemperance. There might have been ample hospitality and enjoyment without dissipation."

Those have best learned the meaning of the Scripture, that have learned how to apply it as a reproof to their own faults, and a rule to their own practice.

THE ROOK.

PART II.

As evening approaches, the scattered foragers, whose movements we have been witnessing, begin to collect themselves together preparatory to their journey inland. They form a vast phalanx, composed of colonies distributed over a considerable territorial area. The flight at last commences; a small body rises into the air—a signal note is heard, to which a general response succeeds. The call is to mount aloft and sail away. All is now clamour and commotion. A cloud of rooks is wheeling around—itsself an agitated congregation of individuals. The advance guards, the foremost cohorts, lead the way; the dense mass forms into order, and follows—

"A blackening train,
Retiring from the downs, where all day long
They pick'd their scanty fare."

Whither are they bound? To some wood, which, by common consent or custom, affords them a roosting-place. A few perhaps separate from the mass, and settle on the branches of their own "rookdom," if it be conveniently situated; but this is not the general rule. Their roosting-place is selected with reference to the feeding-grounds. Let it, however, be borne in mind that an evening journey of ten or twenty miles after business hours is but a trifle—a short aerial wing-trip—during which much discussion and interchange of news goes on—at least if one may judge from the incessant conversation which is kept up among them. Nor does this conversation cease, even when they have gained their resting-place, where they wheel about over the trees, and settle, and rise and settle again, till darkness spreads around, and all is hushed into repose.

Gilbert White, who informs us that the deep beechen woods of Tisted and Ropley constitute the roosting-places of the thousands which scatter themselves during the day over Selborne Down, observes that their loud cawing, as heard in the village, "blended and softened by distance," sounds like "a confused noise or pleasing murmur, very engaging to the imagination;" and he adds: "We remember a little girl, who, as she was going to bed, used to remark on such an occurrence, in the true spirit of physico-theology, that the rooks were saying their prayers; and yet this child was much too young to be aware that the Scriptures have said of the Deity, 'He feedeth the ravens who call upon him.'"

In winter, when the snow lies deep over the fields and the frost is intense, the rooks often suffer much, and are driven to make every shift in order to glean their sustenance. They are then forced to disband their phalanx into small foraging parties, which wander about far and near. They haunt the public roads, the market garden grounds, the farm-yards, the manure-heaps, the feeding-sheds for cattle, the saline marshes, and the seashore. Often, indeed, under such casualties, are the inland parts of the country almost deserted for a time, the great mass of the rook population having migrated to the latter localities.

The violent storms of autumn, and those also of early spring, not unfrequently prove destructive to these birds. For example, in January, 1839, a

violent hurricane swept over a part of Ireland, from the effects of which not only birds and quadrupeds, but even fishes suffered. In the county of Westmeath, Dean Vignolles, on whose property the circumstance occurred, assured Mr. R. Ball that the amazing number of 33,000 were picked up dead on the shores of a lake some miles in length, with extensive rookeries on its borders. Other fatalities occasionally befall the rook. In the autumn of 1831, there was a dense fog over Lough Neagh and its neighbourhood for two nights and an entire day, during which time great numbers of these birds perished in the waters and were afterwards washed ashore. A similar circumstance occurred a few years since in the harbour of Cove, in the south of Ireland.

But winter has at length passed, and there is a promise of spring. The assembled legions break up; they resolve themselves into their constituent groups, and once more does the old rookery become a scene of animation, nay, even of excitement. Great is the clamour on every side. Some are wheeling aloft, others are shooting upwards, darting about in fantastic evolutions, and then descending, as if under some strange impulse, their ordinary sobriety of demeanour being exchanged for violence of gesticulation. Then ensues a series of squabbles: an unlucky pair or two, young birds—the rejected, perhaps, of some other colony—indicate a desire to become elected as associates, and begin on some tree at a respectful distance to construct a domicile. The community is roused; the burgesses are indignant; “Banish the intruder!” is the cry; “Pull down his nest!” The nest is accordingly torn to pieces, and the pair have to engage in many a contest, unless indeed they quit the inhospitable spot at once, and seek a distant asylum, content to become the progenitors of a new clan. But sometimes they will not yield, and then they triumph by dint of sheer pertinacity; for the community has other and more important business to attend to. Old nests have to be repaired, new nests built, and matches to be settled and approved; besides, accounts have to be made square. Pilferers have been detected in the act of robbing their neighbours—stealing sticks! and these have to be punished; their ill-gotten property has to be divided, and the offenders to be expelled, as unworthy members of the body corporate.

February is generally a busy month. Great meetings are now held; earnest consultations take place, not only in the tree tops, but also on the ground in the adjacent pastures; and sometimes the members of two, sometimes even of three rookeries, three or four miles apart, will unite in deliberate congress. This fact has been observed by Mr. W. Thompson,* and we ourselves can offer our own personal testimony as to its correctness. Carriers, moreover, may be observed to pass from one rookery to another, charged with diplomatic protocols, or with invitations to attend the council, and appoint the time and the place of meeting. There is a general gathering, and order prevails. What topics may be discussed, what alliances proposed and considered, what mutual aid and service agreed upon, what contracts entered into, who is

sufficiently skilled in rook language to interpret? That these council meetings are not without a meaning or an object is evident. But for want of a dragoman, we must be content to remain in ignorance of the “Proceedings” of the convocation.

February is the deliberative month—the month of bustle, argument, and dispute. March is the settling month—the month of order. The old nests are all repaired, the new nests finished, and the weddings are all over. Quiet has succeeded to strife and turmoil; but the quiet is not an apathetic state. Each nest now contains from three to five eggs, and the female devotes herself to the task of incubation. Kindly attentive to his consort, in the meantime, is each faithful mate. During the hours of darkness he perches close to the nest, ever and anon uttering a low guttural sound, as if to cheer her, and assure her of his care and guardianship. The grey dawn appears in the east; it is a signal for the anxious perchers. Each, bidding adieu to his consort, sails off to the nearest feeding-ground, where he loads the throat-pouch with dainty morsels, and returns to feed his expectant partner, who with a tremulous voice and shivering wings hails his approach, and well pleased receives his offering. Not long does he remain; again he sets forth, again he returns, and so on day after day, until the eggs are hatched and the naked young make their appearance. Even then, for the first few days, or a week, it is upon the assiduous male that the supply of food both for the female and the young depends. Faithful bird! thou redest a lesson to man, which the spendthrift, the drunkard, and the selfish idler would do well to consider.

As the young become strong, and require less warmth from the body and sheltering wings of the female, she unites with her mate in the task of procuring food, which has become no light task, when three or four greedy mouths have to be fed, besides sustaining themselves. What a clamour of weak voices is heard, as a dozen rooks, returning with their load, settle each by its respective nest, preparatory to its transfer into the gaping mouths of the fluttering eager brood! What guttural tones of satisfaction succeed—tones no doubt grateful to the parents, who, rejoicing in their offspring, think little of their own toil.

In due time the young leave the nest, and perch upon the neighbouring branches; but it is long before they cease to depend upon their parents; and even when this period arrives, they do not depart, but enter into the general league; they are accepted as free by birth of the corporation. The feeding of the young continues, as we have intimated, for a considerable time after they have left the nests; and when numbers of young are thus assembled together, it is curious to observe how each parent knows its own brood, and is recognised by its brood in turn. Doubtless, the eye of the rook seizes upon minute shades of personal distinction—differences of form or feature which to our eyes would never be made apparent. In like manner, each ewe knows her own lamb, and *vice versa*. Does instinct here act alone, as an inward mysterious director, or is this knowledge the result of observation? The question will admit of discussion.

* An. and Mag. Nat. Hist. vol. viii. p. 488.

Accidents happen in communities of rooks as well as of men, and sometimes a young brood is deprived of both parents. Under such circumstances, are they left to perish? We believe not. On this point our own observations coincide with those of others, and we feel confident that the care of the orphans devolves upon the owners of two or three of the proximate nests, who ungrudgingly contribute to their support. It is of course difficult, from the similarity of the birds themselves, and the elevation of the nests, to obtain very definite information; but we have ourselves seen four or even five old birds feed the young in one nest—a proceeding which would hardly take place were the parent birds of that nest capable themselves of attending to it; and hence we draw the conclusion, that the orphan young are tended and reared by relatives or friends—elder brothers or sisters, or cousins, uncles, or aunts.

We have said that rooks prefer the vicinity of man's abode; they are tied by instinct and by necessity to scenes of cultivation; they love the ploughshare and the harrow, the well-manured corn land and the rich mead. Hence it is that rookeries are so abundant in our island. There is scarcely an old mansion or manor-house that has not its rookery. Innumerable are the villages and small towns which boast of a time-honoured rookery, sometimes on its outskirts, sometimes in its very centre, or around the church. Many are the larger towns wherein a rookery still flourishes; nor will the birds readily forsake the spot even when the trees are cut down, and instances have been known of their resorting, under such circumstances, to an adjacent tower or steeple.

Dr. Darwin records the fact of a whole colony, in 1794, being located on the spire of Welborn Church, in Lincolnshire; and the parishioners affirmed that the rooks had built there from time immemorial. But it appeared that in former times there existed a rookery in some high trees which adjoined the churchyard, and that, on the felling of these, the colony transferred themselves to the church, establishing their nests on the outside of the spire, on the projections above the windows, and even within the spire itself, on any convenient ledge.

A pair of rooks also, many years ago—turned, for some cause, out of an adjacent rookery—built their nest for several seasons above the vane of the spire of the Exchange at Newcastle, which was pulled down in 1793-4. Rejected by the community, they refused to quit the locality, though they had to contend for their rights against persecuting opponents.

And here we may advert to our London rookeries. "London rookeries!" methinks I hear some country reader exclaim, "London rookeries! what can the writer mean?" He means what he says, "London rookeries." Rooks have ever been partial to London and its environs; and the metropolis, only a few years since, could boast of several rookeries within its precincts. Most of these, however, if not all, have recently been abandoned. London, placed in the rich valley of the Thames, and contracted in its limits, was once surrounded by woods, intermixed with cleared spaces, converted by cultivation into pastures, corn-lands, and gardens; but London by degrees extended itself

over what were once fields and gardens, and many a clump of tall trees fell under the stroke of the axe. Thus rookery after rookery disappeared. Still some clumps were spared, as ornaments to enclosed spaces, churches, or mansions. Sometimes these clumps consisted only of two, three, or four trees, and those not of the highest growth, while sometimes only a single tree, out of a coppice or small wood, was left as the memento of a sylvan scene. To these trees, not previously tenanted, the ejected rooks resorted, and from their nests aloft saw London grow throughout long-stretching lines, into the old feeding-grounds, and fill up the intervening spaces by piles of brickwork, converting lanes into busy streets, and deforming meadows by mills, founderies, gas-works, and factories, while over all floated a dense canopy of smoke and gaseous elements, beneath which the flowers faded and vegetation withered. Long did the rooks maintain their ground, and submit to the nuisance of a pestilential atmosphere, as well as an increasing difficulty of procuring food. At length one occurrence after another conspired to force the rooks to retreat from their old haunts, and migrate to the nearest suburban districts, there to found new establishments, which, in their turn, will have to be evacuated. Alas! the axe is at work around us, and the axe has done more to drive the rooks from London than all other causes combined. In the time of Dr. Johnson, an old-established rookery, of considerable population, flourished in the Temple Gardens—in the gardens of the red and the white roses. A lively, if not very scientific, account of this rookery is given by Goldsmith, in his almost forgotten "Animated Nature." Long after Johnson's day did this rookery continue; but it dwindled by degrees—even as did the roses—and it now no longer exists.

There was also a large rookery formerly in the trees of the gardens around Carlton Palace. We ourselves can remember it. From this old establishment the rooks were exiled in 1827, when the trees were cut down, their occupants removing to a clump behind New Street, Spring Gardens, also in its turn deserted. There was even lately a colony of rooks in the trees near Fife House, at the back of Whitehall. For many years, too, rooks built their nests on the churchyard plane-trees of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East; but they suddenly deserted the locality, in consequence, as it is believed, of the fire in 1814, by which the old Custom House was destroyed, and which greatly terrified them. This desertion, however, was only temporary; for the rookery was tenanted before the last church was removed, and consisted of upwards of twenty nests. On the pulling down of the church, in 1829, they transferred themselves to the White Tower, but returned as soon as the noise of axes and hammers had ceased. In 1849, their building materials were hospitably provided for them by Mr. Crutchley, the assistant overseer. We believe that this rookery now no longer flourishes.

There was formerly a rookery on some large elm-trees, behind the Ecclesiastical Court in Doctors' Commons, which is noticed by Mr. Hone, in his "Every-day Book." A large plane tree, growing in a small courtyard, at the corner of Wood Street, Cheapside, has long been noted for its

rooks' nests, to the number of three or four, and which have only lately ceased to be tenanted. Two or three years since we had an opportunity of watching the birds almost daily, as they went and returned, bringing food to the young. Undisturbed by the city's din, they preserved their usual tranquillity, and pursued aloft their avocation. Many were the passengers who, as they hurried along intent upon business, would pause for a moment to gaze on a spectacle at once so novel and interesting as a city-rookery—small, it is true, but still a rookery—in the very heart of London.

Many other examples might be cited, both in London and in its immediate suburbs, but the foregoing must suffice for the present.

THE "PATH-FINDER."

AN EVENING WITH DR. LIVINGSTONE.

WE had felt so lively an interest in the darings and doings of the great Christian path-finder before we saw him, that we had theorised upon what the appearance and manner of the outward man *ought* to be, if they were to be in keeping with his achievements. Person is the vehicle of mind, the instrument of action: manner is the expression of the inward being, the legible inscription of the mysterious character that is written within. Well, then, David Livingstone should be a plain, strong, simple-looking man: all great things are simple, all strong things are plain. Such was our hypothesis. Never mind whether there be a very magnificent physical development or not; probably he will not be what is called "a fine man:" statuesque beauty belongs rather to the calm repose of a gentle meditative life, where no workings of strong feeling make a ploughed field of the man's face, lining it with the ridges and furrows of present seed-time and of future harvest. He must have come out of such a battle as he has maintained with dangers, out of such a prolonged struggle with difficulties, worn, lined, and aged; but if he be a man of mark, the soul is sure to look out through the eye. As to manner and carriage, they will of necessity be plain, simple, and genuine, delivered from all affectation, free from all vain assumption. This was our theory. Now for the fact.

Our curiosity was to be speedily gratified; for our first opportunity of associating with Dr. Livingstone presented itself very soon after he landed in England, shivering in the December cold of our northern winter. Opportunities of intercourse with the foremost man of his day, as we think he may be fairly called, have since then recurred, in private as well as in public; and this we have esteemed no mean privilege. It is right to say that first impressions were only cut the deeper by further acquaintance.

What, then, was he like? Did the real features of person, and the manifestations of character, harmonize with the hypothetical sketch? Yes, with singular fidelity! We saw before us a rather small wiry man, with a worn and anxious brow; a face on whose dark brown surface, difficulties overcome and dangers encountered had ploughed deep and strong; a very determined mouth, masked, however, beneath an African jungle of black moustache; but the leading feature of the face was an eye of extraordinary power—a true

pathfinder's eye, jet black, and capable of those sudden illuminations which so marvellously flash out the real meanings of the soul. It was an eye alike fitted to subdue a barbarian people, to tame a wild beast, or to illustrate his plain straightforward narratives, with the changing eloquence of intelligent expression. The man was gentle, too, as the greatest and strongest natures are (or at least *ought* to be); and his quiet courtesy was of that genuine native stamp which comes not from studying the rules of society, but from thinking more of others and their feelings than of yourself and your pretensions. This we hold to be the element of true Christian politeness; and its leading features, if not its conventional refinements, may distinguish a man like David Livingstone, who has none of the blood of the Plantagenets in his veins, as perceptibly as the polished gentleman who has quartered his shield with the Howards or the Bohuns. Dr. Livingstone is a plain Scotchman of no aristocratic descent: he was not born to wealth or to hereditary distinction; but though his styles and titles may be unknown at the Herald's Office, he is well known as himself, an intrepid herald who has borne the gospel message to the heathen dwellers of a great thirsting wilderness.

We observed that Dr. Livingstone spoke, from long disuse of his mother tongue, somewhat as foreigners speak who are learning our language; he paused to translate and gather up his words; his sentences were inverted in their idiom; and as he talked, his dark eyes threw in their changing lights, like the bright illuminations in the margin of some quaint old manuscript; and the expressive action of his hands worked out his simply eloquent meanings with a running-by-play of their own. He talked as quietly, as modestly, and as much to the purpose, as when he addressed crowded audiences. Indeed, it was the same thing with him. He had plenty to say which was new and interesting, and so he said it in the simplest manner possible—just letting a quiet, deep stream flow soberly forth from a full reservoir; no playful effluence—no sparkling *jets d'eau* of eloquence (he was too earnest for that); but in manner he was rich indeed. To change the figure: there was enough raw material of thought compressed into a few plain sentences to keep a whole set of common speech-manufacturers at work for a twelvemonth. Such was the simple, earnest, unswerving Christian hero, endowed with that sort of moral, spiritual, intellectual, and physical energy which affords the best specimen of *religion in action*—a plain, strong-minded man who, in the face of dangers and discouragements innumerable, would guide himself through the world's desert places by the light of the "Sun of Righteousness," just as he had patiently determined every position in his unknown pathway across Africa, and mapped out his course by observations taken from the sun. He showed us his own map—a most interesting chart of wide discoveries—and there was the little track of the pathfinder, first running up from the Cape colony, doubling about a little here and there, playing around the Lake Ngami (just like the preparatory sweeps and circles which the carrier-pigeon makes in the air before it darts off in earnest for its distant goal), then plunging deep and stead-

fastly into the wilds, onward and upward to far Loanda. Is not this enough for one unsupported man? Will he not gladly bathe his wearied and fevered limbs in the western wave, warmed and gilded by the rays of an inter-tropical sun? Will he not take ship and eagerly return to England, or at least to the settled and civilized Cape? No, his eye is traversing a continent from west to east; and see, the little slender track starts again, doubles itself back to the central point, and then branches boldly off until it dips into the waters of the Indian Ocean. That thread-like line has girdled a vast continent. And here, before us, was the messenger, returned safe from the unknown land of promise, bringing a good report, and saying that the peaceful soldiers of the cross may immediately go up and possess it in their Master's name.

It was interesting to see a meeting between two such men as Dr. Livingstone and Sir John Richardson—both representative men; the one impersonating the north, the other the south; the one the arctic other the tropic circles—each distinguished by his gold medal; both of them strong, earnest, gifted men, though one had been led by the polar star of science, the other by the southern cross. There was another to complete the triumvirate—the gifted and eloquent Professor Sedgwick. Shall we say that he, the enthusiastic geologist, represented the land we live in? the mountains with their scarped sides, the rich valleys with their fresh alluvial face, the grand old primitive rocks, which lift so bold a front to the sea and to the storm, the contorted stratum and the volcanic dyke, with all the manifold forms of organic structure which lie hid in series upon series of the rocks of our land—a history writ in cipher on page after page of the great clasped volume! But Professor Sedgwick's flashing eye has got the key to the cipher, and he can read off rock-history fluently, chapter after chapter. He and his knowing little hammer are indigenous in our northern valleys; in fact, he is one of our dalesmen, and the dales plume themselves on their brilliant product, and think the sharp "rap tap" of his geological hammer, when he revisits them, one of the very finest notes in their native music.

We wish we could give an idea of Dr. Livingstone's simple but most sagacious and intelligent talk; but this it is impossible to do, without giving a whole series of questions, answers, and rejoinders. It was made up of novel and agreeable little bits—a mosaic of topics—and yet all capable of fitting together, and of being arranged into one harmonious pattern. You had cheery little glimpses of missionary life far beyond the rough and ragged outskirts of civilization, where the Doctor made his own bricks, lifted up his axe against the tall trees, squared the door of his dwelling, and, with the aid of the calm lady who now sat thankful by the side of her restored husband, baked his meal in an oven scooped out of an anthill, moulded his candles, made his own soap, milked the cows, and enacted the character of smith, and gardener, and school-master by turns; while, under all and through all, he was ever ready to speak lovingly to the people of Christ and of heaven, "reasoning with them concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Then came the long journeyings

in the wagon, with droughts, and dangers, and mercies innumerable; the interest felt by the simple natives in Mrs. Livingstone (who accompanied her husband in this first expedition), and whom they called "Ma Robert"—"the mother of Robert"—and the generation of little "Ma Roberts" that hence sprung up in the wilds, the memorial name being given to all the queer little swarthy babies whose birth fell upon that auspicious era; though it must be confessed that the honour was shared by their vehicle, as there was presently a whole race of small black "wagons" also running about in the forests. Then there was the discovery of the Lake Ngami; the return all the way to the Cape, in order to send wife and children to England; and then the plunge into the great exploit of his life, the lonely, resolute, trustful journey far up towards the north, away to the western shore, and then all across the continent to the eastern sea. This part of the fragmentary story was full of thrilling novelty and of startling adventure. The forest scenes were some of them beautiful, while the sketches of native character were highly interesting. But notwithstanding the simple character and primitive polity of the native folk, Dr. Livingstone had seen enough of heathenism to make him turn from it with mingled pity and disgust; enough, truly, to make him clasp his Bible to his heart; enough to make him profoundly sensible that even the *indirect* influence of Christianity is a blessing second only to the full reception of its spirit. Human nature is the same everywhere, only varying its outward complexion with climate, only adapting its outward features to circumstances: until divine grace change it, it is everywhere essentially the same within.

Dr. Livingstone dwelt earnestly and hopefully on the capabilities of the soil of Central and Southern Africa, and on the value and variety of the articles of commerce which it produces, and to these he fervently looked as an antidote to the hideous evils of the slave-trade. The people are singularly commercial in their habit of mind; they speedily catch the idea, first of barter, then of trade in its more civilized form: and it was amusing to see how soon an article ran up in marketable value if it got at all into demand. Sometimes Dr. Livingstone came upon a spot of delightful fertility, a watered garden, rejoicing in its maize and millet, its sugar-canes, yams, beans, and melons—a southern land of Goshen. At other times he was dependent for the quenching of thirst on the precious water-melon, which most abounds where water is not, and which, to thankful man and eager cattle, is like a providential "brook by the way." Sometimes he was interested in watching the wheeling flight of thousands of swallows and other migratory birds, and he thought that probably, like himself, they were travellers from distant Europe, to return thither much sooner than he. In another spot there were gentle turtle-doves making their little homes of peace on trees which bent over a reckless and roaring torrent. Then there was an ibis screaming on her hollow tree; or the noisy plover, a "public-spirited individual," as he called it, flying and crying above the head of the intruder, and officiously warning all the game within hearing that there was a hunter on

their trail. These were old acquaintances, but there was a long array of new friends and foes; from the lion that broke the Doctor's arm, to the intolerable tsetse fly; from the graceful antelopes and elands down to the charming little honey-bird. We should like to have told his story about the honey-bird, and his honourable conduct towards it, so strictly in accordance with the principles of forest equity; but we have given it elsewhere, and must therefore refrain.* He spoke with thrilling memory of that magnificent plunge of the grand river Zambesi, to which he has given the name of the Victoria Falls—the marvellous rent into which the river makes so wild and abandoned a descent; the sharp basaltic lip over which it precipitates itself; the five great columns of “resounding smoke,” (as the natives love to call it), which rise up monumentally from its hidden entombment, spanned by such an iris as a southern sun can weave of pearly belts of light. It was on the little island that divides the stream above the fall, just where it is hurrying downward to be shivered into atoms of eddying foam, that the traveller has planted the first English garden in Central Africa. There, in a soil watered by perpetual foam-showers, he set his hundred peach and apricot-stones, and drilled in his coffee-seeds. There he cut on a tree the initials “D. L.” with the date 1855; and there he left his fruit-bearing hopes to germinate in this the parent garden of a new world. We wish thee all joy, David Livingstone, now that thou hast gone to revisit thy garden in the wilds! Mayest thou find that *all* the seed which thou hast sown has “struck deep root until it fill the land.” It was good seed: may it bring forth fruit, “some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold;” and mayest thou once more return to us, even with joy, “bearing thy sheaves with thee.”

FAITHFULNESS TO FRIENDS.—On one occasion, the late excellent Charles Simeon was summoned to the dying bed of a brother. Entering the room, his relative extended his hand to him, and with deep emotion said, “I am dying, and you never warned me of the state I was in, and of the danger to which I was exposed from neglecting the salvation of my soul!” “Nay, my brother,” replied Mr. Simeon, “I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject of religion before your mind, and frequently alluded to it in my letters.” “Yes,” exclaimed the dying man, “you did; but that was not enough. You never came to me, closed the door, and took me by the collar of my coat, and told me that I was unconverted, and that, if I died in that state, I should be lost. And now I am dying, and, but for God’s grace, I might have been for ever undone!” It is said that this affecting scene made a lasting impression on Mr. Simeon’s mind.

To the more wise and thinking, to the more considerate and contemplative, the Bible recommends itself by those innate excellences which are self-evident characteristics of its Divine original. If we look attentively we shall soon be aware of God’s image and superscription upon it. A mind rightly disposed by an humble sincere subjection to its Maker, will easily discover the image of his wisdom in the awful depth of its mysteries; the image of his sovereignty in the commanding majesty of its style; the image of his unity in the wonderful harmony and symmetry of all its parts; the image of his holiness in the unspotted purity of its precepts; and the image of his goodness in the manifest tendency of the whole to the welfare and happiness of mankind in both worlds: in short, it is a work that fathers itself.—*Matthew Henry.*

* See “Sunday at Home,” No. 210, article on “Honey.”

Poetry.

“THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF BIRDS IS COME.”

THE hour of song is come!
O’er all the wakening earth,
And through heaven’s choral dome
Swells high a voice of mirth;
And where the flashing streamlets roam,
Life has its tuneful birth.

A sound, a motion slight,
An impulse half concealed,
A whisper but so light,
A thrill but scarce revealed,
Tells that a rush of life-blood bright
Has earth’s cold veins unsealed.

The fig-tree’s branch is green,
The tender vine-bud swells,
The floweret’s brightest sheen
Gleams from its waving bells;
And where the turtle’s voice hath been
The quivering rose-leaf tells.

The lark’s ecstatic lay,
On waves of sun-light borne,
From where the fount of day
O’erflows its crystal urn,
Swells the glad strains that float away
Far o’er the fields of morn.

I’ve heard a sweeter song—
It came from leafless bowers,
When storm-winds swept along
The plains where midnight lowers;
And from the thorny boughs among,
Those hymn-notes chimed the hours.

Higher than matin swell,
Richer than choir of day,
Softer than vesper bell,
Or wind-harp’s lightest play,
That midnight hymn*—I knew it well,
And who inspired the lay.

When clouds in wild haste rove
Over the storm-swept sky,
A holy white-winged dove
From the cleft rock doth fly—
A soft-plumed messenger of love,
On radiant wing borne high.

Where’er by new-closed tomb
A pale-browed mourner bends—
Where from death’s curtained room
Life’s quenchless flame ascends—
Where prayer can pierce grief’s deepest gloom,
Or praise its soft breath sends:—

Where star-beam from above
Can sparkle on a tear,
Where the cross bends in love,
The penitent to cheer;
There comes that holy, heavenly Dove,
On gentle mission here.

Oh, ever in our breast
Fold thou thy wing of light,
And take thy hallowing rest
Where sin had breathed its blight,
And teach us, from thy hidden nest,
Songs in affliction’s night!

* “He giveth songs in the night.”—Job xxxv. 10.

Varieties.

THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE ATLANTIC.—The "Mar de Sargasso," as the Spanish navigators term the central portion of the Atlantic, stretching westward from the Canaries and Cape Verde Islands—a surface fifteen times greater than that of Great Britain—may be described as a vast stagnant pool, receiving the drift seaweed, which the surrounding currents fling into it, and generating on its calm surface what has been well called "an oceanic meadow"—of seaweed, the *fucus natans* of botanists. It is in this tract of sea that we see such wonderful specimens of *fuci* as the *Macrobrytis putifera*—having stems from 1000 to 1590 feet in length, and but a finger's size in thickness, branching upwards into filaments like packthread. This vast domain of marine vegetable life is the receptacle, as indeed are the waters of the ocean generally, of an equal profusion of animal existence—from the minute luminiferous organisms which, to borrow Humboldt's phrase, "convert every wave into a crest of light," to those larger forms of life, many of which derive native nutriment from the waters alone, thus richly impregnated with living animal matter. Reason and imagination are equally confounded by the effort to conceive those hosts of individual existence—*cette richesse effrayante*, as Cuvier terms it—generated or annihilated at every passing instant of time. No scheme of numbers can reach them, even by approximation; and science is forced to submit its deductions to the general law that all the materials of organic life are in a state of unceasing change, displacement, and replacement, under new forms and altered functions, for purposes which we must believe to be wisely designed, but which transcend all human intelligence.—*Edinburgh Review*.

FREAKS OF CONCEALED BOGS.—Great difficulties have often been encountered by engineers in carrying earth embankments across low grounds, which, under a fair, green surface, concealed the remains of ancient bogs, sometimes of great depth. Thus, on the Leeds and Bradford Extension, about 600 tons of stone and earth were daily cast into an embankment near Bingley, and each morning the stuff thrown in on the preceding day was found to have disappeared. This went on for many weeks, the bank, however, gradually advancing, and forcing up on either side a spongy black ridge of moss. On the South-Western Railway a heavy embankment, about fifty feet high, crossed a piece of ground near Newnham, the surface of which seemed to be perfectly sound and firm. Twenty feet, however, beneath the surface an old bog lay concealed; and the ground giving way, the fluid, pressed from beneath the embankment, raised the adjacent meadows in all directions like waves of the sea. A culvert, which permitted the flow of a brook under the bank, was forced down, the passage of the water entirely stopped, and several thousand acres of the finest land in Hampshire would have been flooded but for the exertions of the engineer, who completed a new culvert just as the other had become completely closed. The Newton-green embankment, on the Sheffield and Manchester line, gave way in like manner, and to such an extent as to spread out to two or three times its original width. In this case it was found necessary to carry the line across the parts which yielded, upon strong timber shores. On the Dundalk and Enniskillen line a heavy embankment twenty feet high suddenly disappeared one night in the bog of Meghernakill, nearly adjoining the river Fane. The bed of the river was forced up, the flow of the water for the time was stopped, and the surrounding country heavily flooded. A concealed bog of even greater extent, on the Durham and Sunderland Railway, near Aycliff, was crossed by means of a double-planked road, about two miles in length. A few weeks after the line had been opened, part of the road sank one night entirely out of sight. The defect was made good merely by extending the floating surface of the road at this portion of the bog.—*Quarterly Review*.

STOVES IN THE AMERICAN RAILWAY CARS.—These cars accommodate each from sixty to eighty travellers, and in the winter are warmed by stoves, burning anthracite coals—which stoves and which coal, I may mention in parenthesis, are among the greatest afflictions and miseries of the country. Every place to which an unfortunate

stranger can resort is overheated by these abominable contrivances. They burn out all the elasticity and moisture of the atmosphere; they quicken the pulse, inflame the skin, and parch the tongue. Hotels, private houses, railway cars, all are alike rendered intolerable by the heat, until, oppressed by the sulphury and palpitating hotness, depressed in spirit, weakened in body, and well-nigh suffocated, the stranger accustomed to the wholesome fresh air rushes out to get a gulp of it, and takes cold by the suddenness of the transition. Perhaps the universal use of these stoves may account for the sallowness of so many of the American people, which contrasts so remarkably with the ruddy freshness of the English. An equal freshness is seldom to be seen here, except in the young children and among new-comers. He who would avoid this nuisance, as well as such other discomforts of the rail, as the want of all support for the back or the head in long journeys, rendering sleep an unattainable blessing, should travel by the steam-boats whenever he has a chance.—*Letter from Dr. Mackay, in the "Illustrated London News."*

HOW TO FOSTER A TALENT FOR DRAWING.—If a child has talent for drawing, it will be continually scriawling on what paper it can get; and should be allowed to scrawl at its own free will, due praise being given for every appearance of care or truth in its efforts. It should be allowed to amuse itself with cheap colours almost as soon as it has sense enough to wish for them. If it merely daubs the paper with shapeless stains, the colour-box may be taken away till it knows better; but, as soon as it begins painting red coats on soldiers, striped flags to ships, etc., it should have colours at command; and, without restraining its choice of subject in that imaginative and historical art, of a military tendency, which children delight in (generally quite as valuable, by the way, as any historical art delighted in by their elders), it should be gently led by the parents to try to draw, in such childish fashion as may be, the things it can see and likes—birds or butterflies, or flowers or fruit. In later years, the indulgence of using the colour should only be granted as a reward, after it has shown care and progress in its drawings with pencil.—*Ruskin's "Elements of Drawing."*

VALUE OF THE CROWN JEWELS. As it may be interesting to our readers, who have heard so much lately about *fêtes*, ceremonies, and the magnificence of upholstery, to know the value of some of the articles used on the occasion, we subjoin the estimated price of the jewels of the crown of state which the Queen wore in St. James's Chapel:—

The great ruby	£10,000
The aqua marina	12,000
Twenty diamonds round the circle (£1500 each)...	30,000
Two large centre diamonds (£2000 each).....	4,000
Four crosses, each composed of 25 diamonds.....	12,000
Four large diamonds on the tops of the crosses...	40,000
Twenty-six diamonds contained in the <i>fleur de lis</i>	12,000
Pearls and diamonds on the arches and crosses...	14,000

£134,000

Notwithstanding the enormous mass of jewellery, the crown weighs only nineteen ounces ten pennyweights. It measures seven inches in height from the gold circle to the upper cross, and its diameter at the rim is five inches.

A MOHAMMEDAN OPINION OF OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER.—I may now sum up the character of the English by saying they are entirely submissive to the law and obedient to the commands of their superiors. Their sense of patriotism is greater than that of any nation in the world. Their obedience, trust, and submission to the female sex are far beyond the limit of moderation. In fact, the freedom granted to womankind in this country is great, and the mischief arising from this unreasonable toleration is most deplorable.—*Autobiography of Lutfullah*.

A STEAMBOAT NEWSPAPER.—The New Orleans and St. Louis packet steamer "James E. Woodruff" sails equipped with the force and material for the publication of a regular daily paper on board, during her trip up and down the river, with a job office attached for the printing of bills of fare and other work.